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[54] BOOSTED BRAKING SYSTEM WITH AUTOMATICALLY-CONTROLLED REACTION

[75] Inventors: Jean Pierre Gautier; Ulysse Verbo, both of Aulnay-Sous-Bois; Jacques Houplain, Courbevoie, all of France

[73] Assignee: Bosch Systemes de Freinage, Drancy, France

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[58] Field of Search 60/554, 545, 547.1, 60/577, 558, 593, 533; 91/367, 434, 376 R, 369.2, 369.1, 374, 369.4, 364, 361, 365; 188/356-359, 355, 181 T, 195, 72.4, 6, 346, 71.1, 347, 348, 73.42, 1.11 R; 303/22.1-22.8, 24.1, 9.67, 9.68, 112, 114.1, 50, 52, 113.3, 114.3

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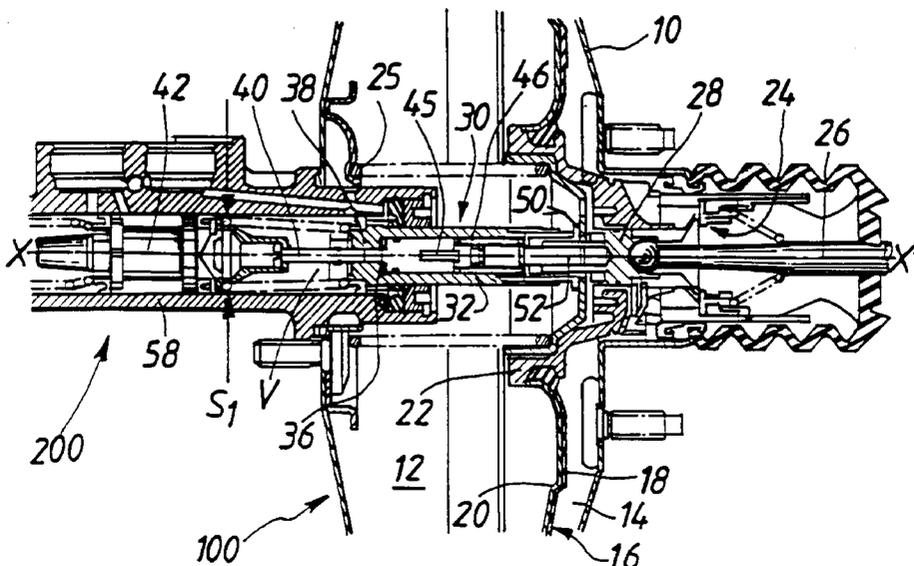
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Primary Examiner—Douglas C. Butler
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Leo H McCormick, Jr.; Warren Comstock

[57] ABSTRACT

A boosted braking system for a motor vehicle having a master cylinder (200) and a pneumatic booster (100). The master cylinder (200) causes an increase in pressure of brake fluid supplied to at least one wheel brake (300). The pneumatic booster (100) is controlled by the application of an input force (F2) to a control rod (26) to actuate the master cylinder (200). A main hydraulic piston (30) of the master cylinder (200) has a hollow cylinder (32) in which a reaction piston (34) slides in a leaktight and axial direction. The reaction piston (34) receives at least the input force (F2). An elastic member (46) located between the reaction piston (34) and hollow cylinder (32) exerts an elastic force for urging the reaction piston (34) toward the master cylinder (200). The reaction piston (34) delimits within the cylinder a reaction chamber (36) which is isolated from the interior volume (V) of the master cylinder (200). The reaction chamber (34) receives hydraulic pressure supplied by at least one sensor (G,G') sensitive to variations in at least on physical magnitude in response to variation in the input force (F2).

10 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets



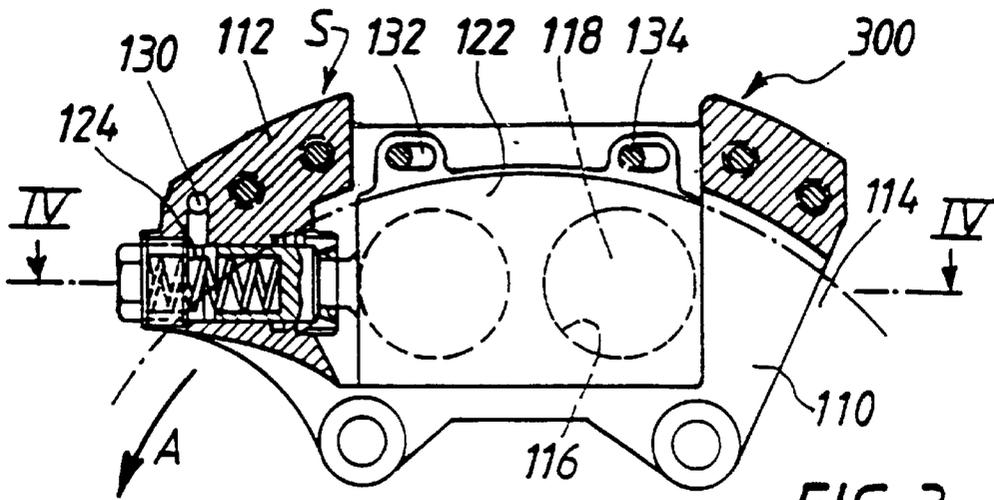


FIG. 3

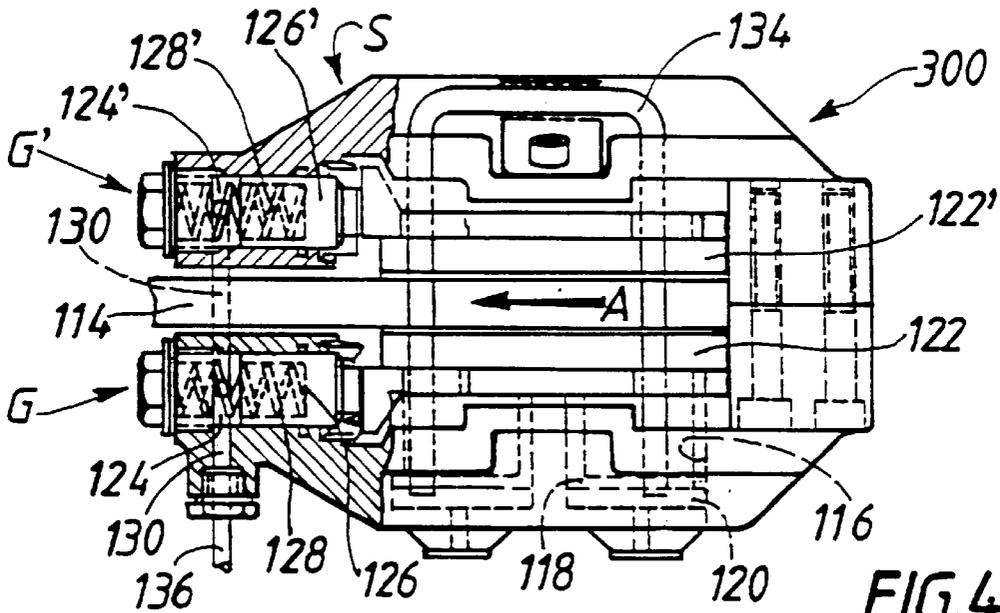


FIG. 4

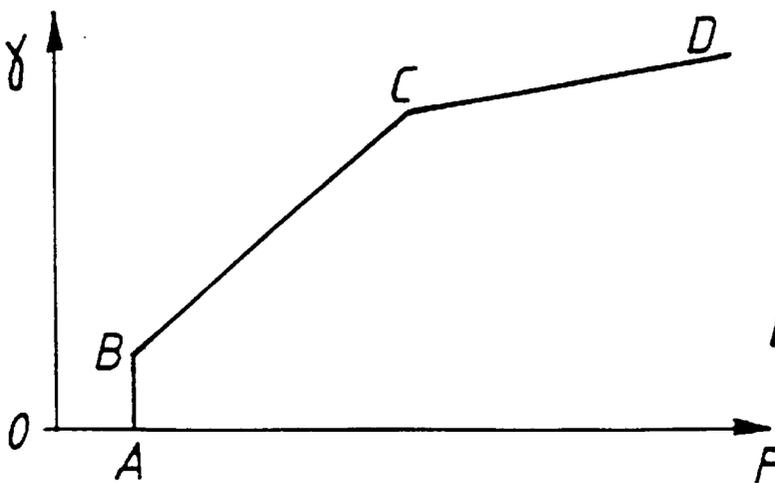


FIG. 5

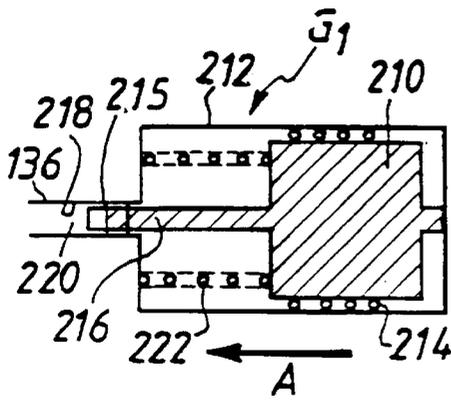


FIG. 6

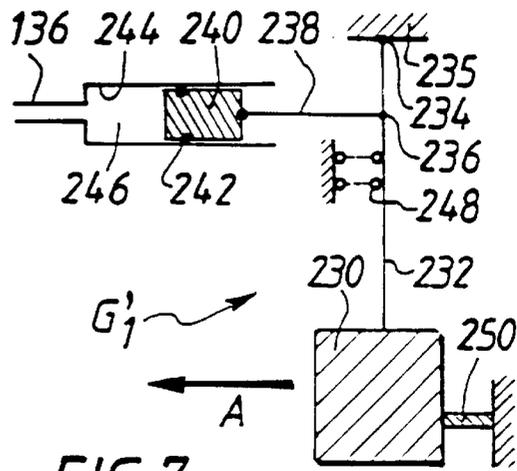


FIG. 7

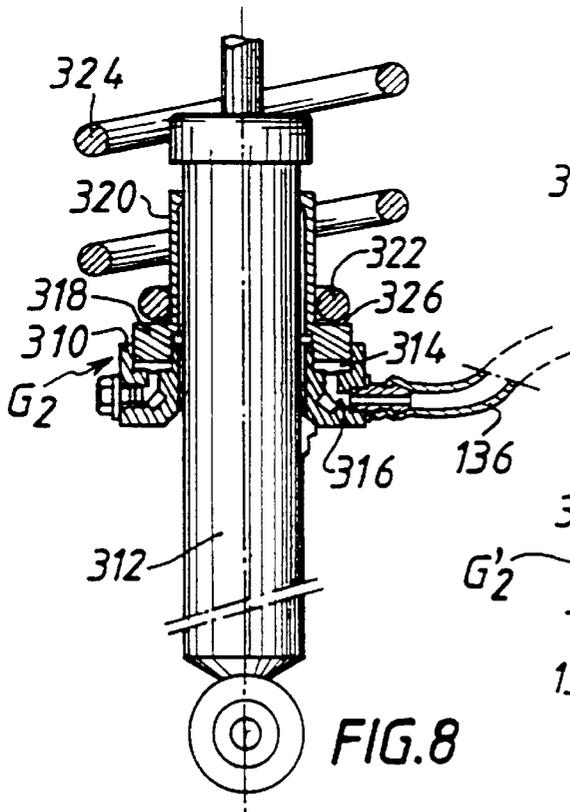


FIG. 8

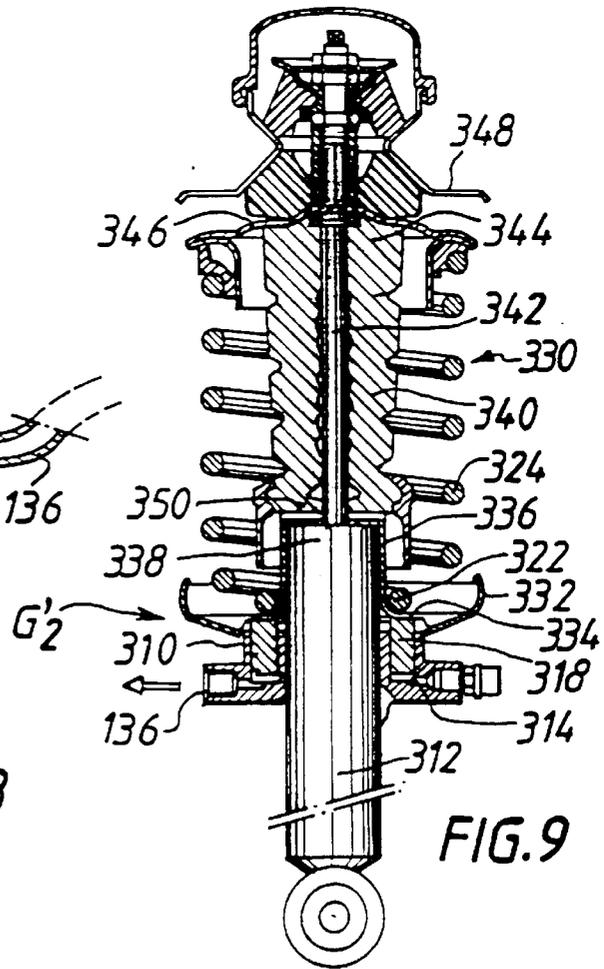


FIG. 9

BOOSTED BRAKING SYSTEM WITH AUTOMATICALLY-CONTROLLED REACTION

The present invention relates to boosted braking systems for motor vehicles, comprising a master cylinder controlling the hydraulic pressure in the brake circuit connected to the brakes of the vehicle, it being possible for this master cylinder to be actuated by a pneumatic booster when the driver of the vehicle depresses the brake pedal.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

In the conventional way, the master cylinder is full of brake fluid and equipped with a main hydraulic piston intended to receive an actuating force composed of an input force and of a boost force both acting in an axial direction.

On the other hand, the pneumatic booster can be controlled by application of the input force to a control rod controlling the opening of a valve so as to exert the actuating force on the main hydraulic piston of the master cylinder, the booster including a rigid casing divided in leaktight fashion into two chambers by means of a moving partition which can be acted upon by a difference in pressure between the two chambers resulting from the opening of the valve and drive along a pneumatic piston which can move with respect to the casing and which carries the valve, the input force being transmitted via a reaction disc against which the pneumatic piston also rests in order to impart at least some of the boost force thereto.

A device of this type is well known in the prior art and is described, for example, in document U.S. Pat. No. 4,491, 058.

These braking devices have, as advantage, as a result of the use of a pneumatic piston which can move with respect to the rigid casing, the fact that the total travel available to the control rod, and therefore to the brake pedal, is relatively long, which constitutes a necessary condition in providing optimum control over the brake fluid pressure supplied to the brakes of the vehicle.

In parallel, boosted braking devices have been developed in which the reaction exerted on the control rod is supplied no longer mechanically by a reaction disc, but by the hydraulic pressure prevailing in the master cylinder.

In these devices, the main hydraulic piston of the master cylinder itself includes a hollow moving cylinder communicating with the master cylinder, receiving at least some of the boost force, and inside which there slides, in leaktight fashion and in the axial direction, a reaction piston which can receive at least the input force, elastic means exerting an elastic force between the reaction piston and the moving cylinder and urging the reaction piston towards the master cylinder, at least one opening being made in the moving cylinder to make the inside thereof communicate with the inside of the master cylinder.

Such a device is described, for example, in document FR-A-2,658,466.

These devices with hydraulic reaction have the main advantage that irrespective of the intensity of the braking action or the rate of application of the input force, their characteristic operating curve, namely the curve giving the pressure in the master cylinder as a function of the intensity of the input force on the booster, is unchanged.

However, all these boosted braking devices, whether they have mechanical reaction or hydraulic reaction, allow only the hydraulic pressure supplied to the wheel brakes to be

controlled, but do not allow all the parameters involved in the braking of a motor vehicle to be taken into account.

One important parameter involved in braking is the coefficient of adherence between the wheel to be braked and the ground over which it is running. During a braking action, this coefficient can vary greatly, for example if the vehicle hits a portion of wet ground while the driver is braking on dry ground. As the adherence of the wheels to the ground in such a case is then appreciably lower, there is the risk of the wheels locking and the vehicle skidding.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention falls within this context, and its object is to propose a boosted braking system in which the feel felt by the driver when he depresses the brake pedal is improved, and especially one in which the driver can easily control the evolution of a braking parameter which represents this braking better than the hydraulic pressure sent to the brakes, it being necessary for such a braking system in addition to be of low cost while operating reliably under all circumstances.

To this end, the present invention proposes a boosted braking system for a motor vehicle, comprising on the one hand a master cylinder full of brake fluid and equipped with a main hydraulic piston intended to receive an actuating force composed of an input force and of a boost force both acting in an axial direction, and on the other hand a pneumatic booster which can be controlled by application of the input force to a control rod integral with a plunger controlling the opening of a three-way valve so as to exert the actuating force on the main hydraulic piston, the booster including a rigid casing divided in leaktight fashion into at least two chambers by means of at least one moving partition which can be acted upon by a difference in pressure between the two chambers resulting from the opening of the three-way valve and drive along a pneumatic piston which can move with respect to the casing, carrying the three-way valve and contributing at least to transmitting the boost force, the main hydraulic piston of the master cylinder itself including a hollow moving cylinder receiving at least some of the boost force and inside which there slides, in leaktight fashion and in the axial direction, a reaction piston which can receive at least the input force, elastic means exerting an elastic force between the reaction piston and the moving cylinder and urging the reaction piston towards the master cylinder.

Such a boosted braking device is known, for example, from document EP-B-0,443,886.

According to the present invention, the reaction piston delimits in the moving cylinder a reaction chamber isolated from the interior volume of the master cylinder and in which the hydraulic pressure supplied by at least one sensor sensitive to variations in at least one physical magnitude in response to the variations in the input force prevails.

Thanks to this arrangement, the feel felt by the driver when he depresses the brake pedal is the one associated with the evolution in the physical magnitude, such as the deceleration of the vehicle, for example, which is then more easy to control.

According to one embodiment, in which the wheel brake includes at least one friction pad which can be brought into frictional contact with a rotating element integral with a wheel of the vehicle when the brake fluid pressure in the wheel brake increases, the invention makes provision for the sensor piston is in abutment on the friction pad under the effect of urging from second elastic means.

According to another embodiment, the sensor includes at least one inertial mass which can move in a direction parallel to the direction of travel of the vehicle and is able to shift the sensor piston in its bore.

According to yet another embodiment, the sensor includes a sensor piston subjected to the action of a suspension spring associated with a damper of the vehicle.

Further objects, features and advantages of the invention will emerge clearly from the description which follows of embodiments given by way of non-limiting examples with reference to the appended drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 represents a view in section of a boosted braking device forming part of the boosted braking system produced in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 2 represents a view in section on a larger scale of the central part of the device of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 represents a view in section of a sensor associated with and forming part of the boosted braking system according to the present invention;

FIG. 4 represents a view in section on IV—IV of the sensor of FIG. 3;

FIG. 5 represents the characteristic operating curve of the boosted braking system in accordance with the present invention, and represents the variations in deceleration of the vehicle as a function of the force applied to the brake pedal;

FIG. 6 diagrammatically represents a second embodiment of a sensor associated with the boosted braking device of FIG. 1;

FIG. 7 represents a diagrammatic view of an alternative form of the sensor of FIG. 6;

FIG. 8 represents a view in part section of a third embodiment of the sensor associated with the boosted braking device of FIG. 1; and

FIG. 9 represents a view in part section of an alternative form of the sensor of FIG. 8.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

In so far as the invention relates merely to an improvement made to pneumatically boosted braking systems, and as the overall construction and operation of such systems are well known to those skilled in the art, these systems will be recalled here briefly merely to give a complete understanding of the improvement that the invention represents.

Schematically, a system of this type comprises a booster **100** and a master cylinder **200** intended to actuate a brake motor **300**.

The booster **100** is designed to be fixed in the usual way to a bulk head (not represented) separating the engine bay of a vehicle from the passenger compartment of this vehicle and to be actuated by a brake pedal (not represented) situated in this passenger compartment. The master cylinder **200** controlling the hydraulic brake circuit of the vehicle is fixed to the front wall of the booster **100**.

By convention, that part of the booster/master cylinder assembly which points towards the master cylinder **200** is known as the "front" and that part of this assembly which points towards the brake pedal **12** is known as the "rear". In FIGS. 1 and 2, the front is thus to the left and the rear to the right.

The booster **100** itself comprises a rigid casing **10**, the interior volume of which is divided into a front chamber **12**

and a rear chamber **14**, in leaktight fashion, by a moving partition **16** comprising a membrane **18** and a rigid skirt **20** and capable of driving along a pneumatic piston **22** which can move inside the casing **10**.

The front chamber **12**, the front face of which is closed in leaktight fashion by the master cylinder **200**, is permanently connected to a source of partial vacuum (not represented). The pressure in the rear chamber **14** is controlled by a three-way valve **24** controlled by a control rod **26** connected to the brake pedal and integral with a plunger **28**.

When the control rod **26** is in the position of rest, that is to say pulled towards the right, the valve **24** establishes a communication between the two chambers **12** and **14** of the booster. As the rear chamber **14** is then subjected to the same partial vacuum as the front chamber **12**, the piston **22** is shifted back towards the right, into the position of rest, by a spring **25**.

Actuation of the control rod **26** towards the left has the effect, first of all, of shifting the valve **24** so that it isolates the chambers **12** and **14** from one another then, secondly, of shifting this valve in such a way that it opens the rear chamber **14** to atmospheric pressure.

The difference in pressure between the two chambers **12** and **14** then felt by the membrane **18** exerts on the moving partition **16** a thrust which tends to shift it towards the left and allow it to drive along the piston **22** which in turn is shifted, compressing the spring **25**.

The brake boosting force F_1 , or "boost force", resulting from the thrusting of the moving partition **16**, and the braking force F_2 exerted on the control rod **26**, or "input force" are then applied together in the direction of the axis X-X' of the booster **100** in the direction of the master cylinder **200** and combined to constitute the actuating force therefor.

More specifically, the actuating force F_1 is applied to the main hydraulic piston **30** of the master cylinder and causes it to shift towards the left (in FIGS. 1 and 2), which leads to a rise in pressure in the brake fluid present in the interior volume V of the master cylinder **200**, and actuation of the brake motor **300** connected thereto, as is well known in the technical field of braking.

As better seen in FIG. 2, the main hydraulic piston **30** is in fact composite and comprises, on the one hand, a moving and hollow cylinder **32** and, on the other hand, a reaction piston **34**.

The interior volume of the hollow moving cylinder **32** is separated from the interior volume V of the master cylinder **200** by a leaktight wall **38**, to which a device **40** for adjusting the separation between the moving cylinder **32**, constituting the primary piston of the master cylinder, and the secondary piston **42** of the master cylinder may be fixed.

The reaction piston **34** slides in leaktight fashion in the moving cylinder **32** by means of an annular seal **44** and delimits therewith a reaction chamber **36**. In addition, the reaction piston **34** is urged forwards by a spring **46** resting against a shoulder **48** of the moving cylinder **32**, as has been represented in FIG. 1.

The moving cylinder **32** is connected, via a ring **50**, to the rigid skirt **20** in such a way as to receive at least some of the boost force F_1 exerted by this rigid skirt **20**. Advantageously, as will be seen later, the shoulder **48** is formed at the front end of the ring **50**.

The reaction piston **34** is arranged axially, facing a thrust rod **52** integral with the plunger **28** and capable of transmitting thereto at least the input force F_2 exerted on the control rod **26** itself integral with the plunger **28**.

In addition, the moving cylinder **32** is formed with a peripheral groove **54**, connected by a duct **56** to the reaction chamber **36**. The axial length of the groove **54** is such that irrespective of the position of the moving cylinder **32** with respect to the body **58** of the master cylinder, it is always in communication with an opening **60** made in the body **58**. In this way, the reaction chamber is in permanent communication with the opening **60**.

The operation of the boosted braking system described hitherto will now be explained.

At rest, the various moving parts occupy the position represented in FIGS. 1 and 2, and in particular the reaction piston **34** is in abutment towards the front on the bottom **62** of the moving cylinder **32** under the effect of the urging of a spring **46**. The valve **24** allows communication between the two chambers **12** and **14**, which are therefore at the same reduced pressure.

A first force on the brake pedal serves to overcome the preload of the spring of the control rod **26** and bring the valve **24** into a position in which it isolates the two chambers **12** and **14** from one another. This increase in force on the brake pedal therefore provides no increase in pressure in the master cylinder, and therefore no deceleration of the vehicle, and is represented in the curve of FIG. 5 by the segment OA. Adjusting the preload at rest of the spring of the control rod makes it possible to adjust the length of the segment OA to any desired value.

After this predetermined travel of the control rod **26**, the valve **24** opens the rear chamber **14** of the booster **100** to atmosphere, and a difference in pressure between the two chambers **12** and **14** of the booster is established. This pressure difference causes a boost force F_1 which makes the rigid skirt **20** and the moving cylinder **32** advance.

The hydraulic pressure in the internal volume V of the master cylinder **200** therefore rises and is transmitted, by pipes (not represented) to the brakes **300**.

In the example represented in FIGS. 3 and 4, the brakes **300** consist of disc brakes. Such brakes conventionally include a stationary support **110** integral with a stationary part of the vehicle, and a calliper **112** straddling a rotating disc **114** integral with a wheel (not represented) of the vehicle.

The calliper **112** includes at least one cylinder **116** (two in the example represented in FIGS. 3 and 4) in which there slides in leaktight fashion a piston **118** therein delimiting a working chamber **120**.

The hydraulic pressure caused by the master cylinder **200** is communicated to the chamber **120** and causes the piston **118** to advance towards a friction pad **122** in order to bring it into contact with the face opposite the disc **114** and thus slow its rotational speed.

If the disc brake **300** is of the fixed calliper type, then on the other side of the disc it includes another chamber (not represented) in which another piston pushes a second friction pad **122'** into frictional contact with the other face of the disc **114**. If the disc brake **300** is of the sliding-calliper type, then the calliper **112** by reaction presses the other friction pad **122'** against the other face of the disc **114**.

The friction of the pads **122** and **122'** on the disc **114** therefore results in forces applied to the calliper **112** and transmitted to the chassis of the vehicle via the stationary support **110**. When the disc **114** is turning in the direction of the arrow A corresponding to the vehicle running forwards, the braking forces are directed towards the part S of the calliper situated downstream with respect to the direction of

rotation of the disc, that is to say towards the left-hand part of FIGS. 3 and 4. This part S is also known in the art as the "torque output" part.

The calliper **112** is equipped in this part S with sensors G and G' consisting of bores **124** and **124'** arranged on each side of the disc **114** and in which there slide in leaktight fashion sensor pistons **126** and **126'** urged by springs **128** and **128'** so that they come into abutment on the friction pads **122** and **122'**. The bores **124** and **124'** thus define sensor chambers which are joined together by a pipe **130**.

The friction pads **122** and **122'** are mounted in an opening of the calliper **112** and are held therein while at the same time being capable of moving therein. The friction pads **112** and **122'** are formed with oblong slots **132** in which the arms of a clip **134** engage, so as to hold the friction pads in the calliper.

As a function of the braking forces caused by the rubbing of the friction pads **122** and **122'** on the opposite faces of the disc **114**, the friction pads **122** and **122'** will exert on the sensor pistons **126** and **126'** forces which are proportional to the deceleration of the vehicle.

In effect, for a given vehicle, the deceleration of this vehicle is a function of the braking torque provided by the brake **300**, itself a function of the braking pressure supplied by the master cylinder to the working chamber **120** of the brake, and of the coefficient of adherence of the wheels to the ground.

The force with which the friction pads **122** and **122'** act upon the sensor pistons **126** and **126'** is itself also proportional to the deceleration of the vehicle because the friction pads are subjected, on the one hand, to the braking pressure imparted by the piston **118** and, on the other hand, to the drag of the wheel on the ground, which is a function of the coefficient of adherence of the wheel to the ground, and transmitted to the friction pads by the disc **114**.

The pressure in the chambers **124** and **124'** is therefore representative of the deceleration of the vehicle and it is transmitted by a pipe **136** to the reaction chamber **36** of the master cylinder **200** and is exerted on the cross-sectional area S of the reaction piston **34**.

First of all, the force caused by this pressure exerted on this cross-sectional area S does not exceed the preload at rest of the spring **46**, so that the reaction piston **34** remains immobile with respect to the moving cylinder **32**, and some distance from the thrust rod **52**, no reaction then being felt on the brake pedal. This first phase of operation is represented by the segment AB of the curve in FIG. 5, where there is an increase in pressure in the master cylinder **200** and in the brake **300**, and therefore deceleration of the vehicle without variation in the input force. The length of the segment AB is known as the "jump" of the booster.

The booster jump can be set to any desired value by adjusting the preload at rest of the spring **46**. For example, as has been represented in FIG. 1, provision may be made for the ring **50** to be threaded and screwed into the moving cylinder **32** to which it transmits at least some of the boost force exerted on the skirt **20** bearing against it.

Screwing the ring **50** into the moving cylinder **32** thus has the effect of compressing the spring **46** and therefore of increasing the preload exerted thereby on the reaction piston **34** towards the master cylinder, that is to say of further increasing the value of the jump.

In order to compensate for the reduction in length which results from screwing the ring **40** into the moving cylinder **32**, this ring is, for example, made of two parts screwed together so as to have an adjustable overall length.

It is also possible to envisage the push rod **42** itself being made as two parts screwed together so as to have an adjustable overall length, adjusting this length making it possible especially to alter the opening of the valve when the jump occurs, irrespective of the value given to this jump by screwing the ring **40** into the moving cylinder **32**.

In a second phase of operation, the hydraulic pressure increases in the chambers **124**, **124'** and **36** and reaches a predetermined value for which, applied to the cross-sectional area S of the reaction piston **34**, it becomes sufficient to overcome the preload at rest of the spring **46**. The reaction piston **34** then moves backwards and comes into contact with the push rod **42**, as illustrated by the point B on the curve in FIG. 5. Advantageously, a buffer piece **45** made of rubber or some other elastomeric material may be provided at the rear of the reaction piston **34** and/or at the front of the push rod **42** to deaden the impact of this contact and the resulting noise.

The reaction piston **34** then exerts on the push rod **42** and on the brake pedal a reaction force which depends on the pressure prevailing in the reaction chamber **36** and therefore depends on the deceleration of the vehicle, opposing the input force and thus allowing this deceleration to be controlled by the input force, as represented by segment BC on the curve in FIG. 5.

The slope of this segment BC represents the boost ratio of the braking system. This boost ratio is also equal to the ratio of the cross-sectional area S_1 of the moving cylinder **32** (FIG. 1) to the cross-sectional area S of the reaction piston **34**.

The brake **300** equipped with sensors G and G' will preferably be situated at the front of the vehicle. This is because the braking of the front wheels of the vehicle is always more intense than the braking by the rear wheels. The sensors such as G and G' will therefore provide a more accurate measurement of the braking parameters.

Advantageously the brakes with which the front wheels of the vehicle are equipped will all be equipped with sensors such as G and G', the sensor chambers **124** and **124'** all being linked together hydraulically by the pipe **136**. In this way, the pressure prevailing in the reaction chamber **36** will represent the mean of the pressures caused by the sensors situated on the brakes of the front right and left wheels.

The boost force reaches its maximum when the pressure in the rear chamber of the booster reaches atmospheric pressure, and can therefore not increase further. The phenomenon known by the name of saturation and represented by the point C on the curve in FIG. 5 is then reached.

Beyond the point C, that is to say on the segment CD, the boost force F_1 remains constant and any increase in deceleration of the vehicle is obtained by a corresponding increase in the input force F_2 .

The operation of the braking system just described is reproduced for each braking action irrespective of the rate of application of the input force to the control rod **26**.

When the driver releases his force, the effect of the communication being re-established, via the valve **24**, between the front and rear chambers is to make the moving partition **16** and the moving cylinder **32** retreat under the effect of the spring **25** and to make the pressure in the interior volume V of the master cylinder drop. This drop in pressure is communicated to the working chamber **120** of the brakes **300**, and this results in a reduction in the deceleration of the vehicle.

This also results in a drop in pressure in the chambers **124** and **124'** of the sensors G and G', which drop is communi-

cated to the reaction chamber **36** of the aster cylinder by the pipe **136**. The spring **46** then ushes the reaction piston **34** forwards and the various moving parts then resume their position of rest illustrated in FIGS. 1 to 4.

FIG. 6 represents a second embodiment of the sensor described earlier, more specifically intended for cases when it is desired to profit from the advantages of the present invention, but without having to modify the wheel brakes already on a vehicle.

According to this second embodiment, the sensor G_1 consists of an inertial mass **210** which can move in a housing **212**, for example by means of a ball bearing or roller bearing **214**. The housing **212** is arranged in the vehicle in such a way that its axis is parallel to the direction of travel of the vehicle.

The inertial mass **210** is integral towards the front with a piston **216** sliding in leaktight fashion thanks to at least one annular seal **215** in a bore **218** forming the sensor chamber **220**, connected by the pipe **136** to the reaction chamber **36**. The inertial mass **210** is in addition urged towards the rear of the vehicle by a spring **222** so that it comes into abutment against the back end of the housing **212**.

As in the preceding embodiment, during a braking action, and as a function of the intensity of this braking action, the inertial mass **210** will be urged towards the front of the vehicle to a greater or lesser extent (Arrow A in FIG. 6). In this movement, it moves the sensor piston **216** which in turn compresses the fluid contained in the sensor chamber **220**, connected by the pipe **136** to the reaction chamber **36**. The boosted braking system thus operates in the same way as has already been described.

According to the alternative form represented in FIG. 7, the sensor G_1 includes an inertial mass **230** [lacuna] is integral with one end of a lever **232** articulated by its other end **234** on a stationary part **235** of the chassis or bodywork of the vehicle. At a point **236** part way along the lever **232** is articulated one end of a connecting rod **238** which is articulated by its other end on a piston **240**. The axes of the articulations **234** and **236** are horizontal and are perpendicular to the direction of travel of the vehicle.

The inertial mass **230** or the lever **232** are urged backwards by a tension spring **248** or, as has been represented, a compression spring, so that they come into abutment towards the rear with a stationary part **250** of the chassis or bodywork of the vehicle. In addition, when the vehicle is stationary or is running at constant speed on horizontal ground, the lever **232** is substantially vertical in this position of abutment against the stationary part **250**.

The piston **240** slides in leaktight fashion thanks to at least one seal **242** in a bore **244** forming a sensor chamber **246** connected to the reaction chamber **36** by the pipe **136**.

According to this alternative form, under a braking action and as a function of the intensity of this braking action, the inertial mass **230** will be urged towards the front of the vehicle to a greater or lesser extent (arrow A in FIG. 7), adopting a movement of rotation about the articulation **234**. In this movement, thanks to the connecting rod **238**, it imparts a movement of translation to the piston **240** which in turn compresses the fluid contained in the sensor chamber **246** connected by the pipe **136** to the reaction chamber **36**. The boosted braking system therefore operates in the way which has already been described.

In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 8, the sensor G_2 comprises an annular collar **310** mounted stationary on a damper **312** and has an annular groove **314** connected to the pipe **136** via a passage **316**. The damper **312** is associated

with a front wheel of the vehicle. An annular piston **318** is mounted so that it can slide in leaktight fashion in the annular groove **314** and has a tubular sleeve tube **320** which is arranged with a small amount of clearance around the damper **312**. One end **322** of the suspension spring **324** comes to bear against an annular surface **326** of the annular piston **318**.

Upon a braking action, the load supported by the front damper **312** of the vehicle increases as a function of the intensity of the braking and of the resulting deceleration, this phenomenon being known by the name of "load transfer". This increase in load on the front damper causes a corresponding variation in the force exerted by the suspension spring **324** on the annular piston **318**, leading to a variation in the effective pressure in the sensor chamber formed by the annular groove **314**. This variation in pressure is transmitted by the pipe **136** to the reaction chamber **36**. The boosted braking system therefore operates in the way which has already been described.

According to the alternative form represented in FIG. 9, the suspension element **330** includes a bearing element **332** which is mounted so that it can slide around the damper **312** and which is in abutment against the annular piston **318** of the sensor G'_2 . The bearing element **332** includes an annular part **334** against which the end **322** of the suspension spring **324** comes to bear, and a cylindrical part **336** which surrounds one end **338** of the damper **312**. The suspension element **330** additionally includes a sleeve tube **340** made of elastomeric material arranged around a rod of the piston **342** of the damper **312** and one end **344** of which is mounted stationary on a support plate **346** integral with the chassis **348** of the vehicle.

The sleeve tube **340** has a length which is such that when the vehicle on which the device is mounted is stationary or running at constant speed, the end **350** is situated a small distance from the bearing element **332**. In these conditions, only the force of the suspension spring **324** is transmitted to the annular piston **318**. If the load of the damper **312** increases owing to a deceleration of the vehicle, then the damper **312** is compressed and the end **350** of the sleeve tube **340** comes into abutment against the part **336** of the bearing element **332** in order to exert an additional force on the annular piston **318**. This results in an increase in pressure in the sensor chamber **314**, transmitted by the pipe **136** to the reaction chamber **36**.

As in the first embodiment, the dampers with which the front wheels of the vehicle are equipped will preferably all be fitted with sensors such as G_2 or G'_2 , the sensor chambers **314** all being linked fluidly via the pipe **136**. In this way, the pressure prevailing in the reaction chamber **36** will represent the mean of the pressures caused by the sensors situated on the dampers of the right and left front wheels.

The advantage of this third embodiment lies in the fact that an additional parameter is taken into account to improve the feel felt by the driver when he depresses the brake pedal. This is because the deceleration measured by the sensors such as G_2 or G'_2 takes account of the braking pressure caused by the master cylinder, of the adherence of the front wheels to the ground, and also of the total load supported by the front axle. This load may vary, for example in the case of a rear-engined vehicle with a luggage compartment at the front.

Thus according to the present invention, a boosted braking system has indeed been achieved which has improved operating characteristics because it allows the driver of the vehicle to control very precisely the deceleration of his

vehicle and therefore to adapt his braking force as a function of the instantaneous adherence of the wheels of the vehicle to the ground. The means used to obtain this result are relatively simple and therefore of low cost and operate reliably in all circumstances.

It may also be seen that the reaction chamber **36**/pipe **136**/sensor chambers **124**, **124'** assembly contains a constant and closed volume of fluid. The result of this is that those skilled in the art will be able to choose the cross-sectional area S of the reaction chamber **36** and the cross-sectional areas of the sensor chambers **124** and **124'** at will so as to change the slope of the segment BC of the curve in FIG. 5 without changing the other operating conditions.

Of course the present invention can be altered in numerous ways which will be obvious to those skilled in the art and which fall within the context of the present invention. Thus for example the invention may with equal ease be applied to fixed-calliper or sliding-calliper disc brakes, or to drum brakes. Likewise, the booster used may be a single one or a tandem booster.

We claim:

1. A boosted braking system for a motor vehicle, comprising a master cylinder full of brake fluid and equipped with a main hydraulic piston for receiving an actuating force composed of an input force and a boost force, said input force and boost force both acting in an axial direction to cause an increase in the pressure of brake fluid presented to at least one wheel brake, and a pneumatic booster controlled by the application of said input force which acts on a control rod integral with a plunger to control the opening of a three-way valve for exerting said actuating force on said main hydraulic piston, said booster including a rigid casing divided in leaktight fashion into at least first and second chambers by means of at least one moving partition acted on by a difference in pressure between said first and second chambers resulting from the opening of said three-way valve and driving a pneumatic piston which moves with respect to said casing and carries said three-way valve to transmit said boost force to said main hydraulic piston, said main hydraulic piston including a hollow moving cylinder which receives at least some of said boost force, a reaction piston which slides in a leaktight fashion in the axial direction inside of said hollow moving cylinder, said reaction piston receiving at least the input force, elastic means exerting an elastic force between said reaction piston and said moving cylinder for urging said reaction piston towards the master cylinder, characterised in that said reaction piston delimits in the moving cylinder a reaction chamber which is isolated from an interior volume of the master cylinder and which receives hydraulic pressure supplied by at least one sensor sensitive to variations in at least one physical magnitude in response to the variations in the input force prevails.

2. The boosted braking system according to claim 1, characterised in that said reaction chamber is in permanent communication with an opening in a body of said master cylinder via a duct formed in said moving cylinder emerging in a peripheral groove of the moving cylinder upon moving past said opening.

3. The boosted braking system according to claim 2, characterised in that said sensor includes at least one bore in which slides in leaktight fashion a sensor piston defining a sensor chamber which is connected by a pipe to said reaction chamber of said moving cylinder.

4. The boosted braking system according to claim 3, wherein said wheel brake includes at least one friction pad which is brought into frictional contact with a rotating element integral with a wheel of the vehicle when the brake

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fluid pressure in the wheel brake increases, characterised in that said sensor piston is urged into abutment with the friction pad by a second elastic means.

5. The boosted braking system according to claim 4, characterised in that said rotating element is integral with a front wheel of said vehicle.

6. The boosted braking system according to claim 5, characterised in that said rotating element is a disc.

7. The boosted braking system according to claim 3, characterised in that said sensor includes at least one inertial mass which is moved in a direction parallel to the direction of travel of said vehicle and to shift said sensor piston in said bore.

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8. The boosted braking system according to claim 7, characterised in that said inertial mass is integral with a lever articulated on a stationary part of said vehicle, said lever having a rod connected with said sensor piston.

9. The boosted braking system according to claim 3, characterised in that said sensor includes a sensor piston subjected to the action of a suspension spring associated with a damper of the vehicle.

10. The boosted braking system according to claim 9, characterised in that said damper is associated with at least one front wheel of the vehicle.

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